



THE COACH
APPROACH

PAIN - SELF HELP GUIDE

Physical pain can be anything on a sliding scale from a slight discomfort to absolute agony and can be a short-term condition - perhaps from an injury, such as a broken bone - or even a chronic condition which can last for months or years.

It can be very difficult to cope with pain, particularly if it is chronic, but there are treatments available from your doctor which might help, and there are also things you can do for yourself which could ease your symptoms considerably.

This short guide will give you information on how pain can affect you, what your doctor might recommend and what you can do to help yourself.

What is pain and how can it affect you?

Pain is a chemical signal sent from the site of an injury or sore area to your brain via the spinal cord. It's not a pleasant thing to feel pain, but the pain signal is actually designed to protect you. If you cut your finger, for example, the pain signal instantly alerts you to what has happened so that you know to stop.

Pain is an individual thing and everyone varies in how they experience it and in how much they can easily cope with. Your mood can affect how much pain you feel, too, with an anxious mood likely to make pain feel worse, and a good mood likely to make any pain easier to deal with. That's why some self-help methods, such as learning to relax, really can make all the difference when you are managing pain.

There can also be different types of pain, such as throbbing, stabbing, stinging or aching, so it's important that you describe what you are experiencing as clearly as you can to your medical practitioner to enable them to help you.

Living with any kind of pain can be incredibly stressful. It's hard to relax when things hurt when you move, or you can't do what you usually do. Feelings of anxiety and worry about what is happening and what might happen in the future are possible and you might also feel angry and frustrated at people who don't understand how you feel. If pain lasts for a long time, it is also possible for those feelings to turn into depression.

It can be difficult to continue with your normal life, not only in terms of not being able to do things you used to do, but also with managing work and your home life. Pain can cause insomnia, too, either from how bad it is or from the tension and stress of trying to deal with it.

If you have a broken bone, it is painful but there is some relief to be had in knowing that the pain will lessen as the injury heals, and will ultimately end altogether once healing is complete. Chronic pain, on the other hand, can be far more difficult to cope with mentally, as there really can be no end in sight.

In either case, however, your doctor can help to alleviate the pain, so your first stop should most certainly be your GP.

Treatment methods

For anything other than a very minor injury, don't suffer by yourself. Do get a professional medical opinion as your doctor should be able to help.

Your doctor should discuss with you in great detail about where the pain is, how long you have had it for, what type of pain it is and how bad it feels. From this, he or she should be able to look at what treatments will best relieve your symptoms.

For some injuries, your doctor may simply recommend ice or heat therapy and rest, or they may prescribe some form of pain killer depending on your condition.

There are many different pain killers available, from opioid analgesics to salicylates, so if you find that one gives you side effects or doesn't work for you, don't give up. Go back to your doctor for alternatives that may do a better job.

You may not be aware of this, but some antidepressants can also help with pain so, particularly if you are also suffering from depression, this could be a good option for you, although obviously your doctor will need to make that decision.

Your doctor may also recommend hypnotherapy to help ease your pain. While hypnosis is not a cure for any injuries you have, it does have great success in alleviating pain, to the point that it has been used in place of an anaesthetic in some operations.

Not only can hypnotherapy help with your pain, but if you are suffering from insomnia, tension or anxiety because of your condition, you should find that your therapy session will also calm these symptoms, too.

Self help

In addition to what your doctor and hypnotherapist can do for you, there are ways to help yourself with your pain.

There are a couple of websites you can explore for more information:

The British Pain Society has a list of self-help groups that you might want to join, with further reading and information about pain clinics: <https://www.britishpainsociety.org/>.

The Expert Patients Programme (EPP) is a training programme from the NHS to help people with chronic conditions manage their pain and their condition better. Visit their website for more information: www.expertpatients.nhs.uk.

1. Relax

Relaxing is easier said than done when you are in pain, but if you are tense or stressed, you could find that your pain feels worse.

Again, hypnotherapy is a brilliant way to relax, as well as alleviate other symptoms, but you can also try breathing techniques, visualisation and meditation to ease your tension. If you are physically able to do them, yoga and Pilates are also excellent aids to relaxation, as well as helping you to get fit.

2. Communicate

While dwelling on your pain isn't a good idea as it can make you feel worse both physically and mentally, it's best to talk to your family and friends and let them know how you are feeling and if they can do anything to help. Pain can isolate you if you let it, leaving you feeling misunderstood and alone, but if you keep talking, you'll feel better and your family will feel more involved.

3. Do what you can do

While you might not be able to do everything you could do before, take time for yourself and enjoy the things that you usually enjoy, like hobbies and nights out. It can be difficult to do what you usually do when you are in pain, but make the effort if you can.

Take advantage of the good days when they come and do the things that give you pleasure. You'll feel better for having things to look forward to and that might be enough to ward off depression.

Pace yourself to suit how you feel. If you're having a bad pain day, do small things that you know you can achieve, ask friends to come to you instead of going out and don't be afraid to say 'no' to things if you really can't manage them. People will understand.

4. Exercise

This might seem impossible, and you will have to talk to your doctor about what you are able to do, but if you can do even the smallest amount of exercise, it can aid your recovery, strengthen your body and help you feel better.

Conclusion

Pain can be debilitating, but stay positive, talk to your doctor and your family, get the help you need, and do what you can to help yourself.

If you'd like to find out more about solution focused clinical hypnotherapy and how it can help heal pain issues, please do give me a call or use the booking button on my website. Nothing will happen in our sessions that you aren't comfortable with, and hypnotherapy cannot force you to do things against your will. Just come along to my facility in the beautiful town of Falmouth in Cornwall, and you'll soon find yourself relaxing.

Disclaimer

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